



What's Cooking!

Many holidays are celebrated during the winter months. Although the traditions may differ, there are common factors: cooking and eating are a part of every celebration. This holiday season you might be making a special holiday dish or enjoying a meal someone else has prepared. In honor of this delicious activity, this month's exercise is devoted to common American cooking and food idioms. See if you can match each idiom with its definition. (Answers are at the bottom of the page.)

- 1) I have a great job, and my husband stays home to take care of our children. I'm the one who *brings home the bacon* for the family.
- 2) Since my boss is the CEO of our company, she is a *big cheese*.
- 3) Anton wanted to borrow my car, so he was especially nice to me, trying to *butter me up* to get what he wanted.
- 4) Instead of smoking fewer cigarettes each week, Laura decided to *quit cold turkey* and throw out all her cigarettes.
- 1) The news anchor reported that the banker *cooked the books* to keep the company's money for himself.
- 2) My little brother is a *couch potato*; he just sits at home and watches TV.
- 3) Since Elena works *for peanuts*, she sometimes has trouble paying her rent.
- 4) The surprise party was ruined when someone *spilled the beans* to the birthday girl.
- 5) After learning to speak Japanese, Russian and Farsi, English should be easy, *a piece of cake*.
- 6) Yuko dislikes taking the crowded subway at rush hour because the passengers are *packed in like sardines*.
- 7) We've got *bigger fish to fry*: instead of picking pockets, we're going to rob a bank!

Definitions

- a) excessively praise or flatter someone
- b) easy to accomplish
- c) earn a living that supports an entire family
- d) packed in very tightly
- e) someone who spends a lot of time sitting around
- f) for very little money
- g) important person
- h) told something to someone who is not supposed to know about it
- i) falsified financial records
- j) more important things to do
- k) quickly and completely stop doing something





Tips from Tutors

One of our tutors brought in a list of interjections to practice with his student. Here's an excerpt:

Interjection comes from a Latin word that means "throw between." An interjection is a word or phrase that is thrown into the sentence to express an emotion:

Goodness, how you've grown!

Darn, I forgot my lunch!

Oh dear! I don't know what to do about this mess.

All the impolite expressions that we call expletives are interjections.

Strictly speaking, an interjection is not a part of speech. It serves no grammatical function but is rather a "noisy utterance like the cry of an animal" (F.J. Rahtz). Interjections express feeling or emotion, not thought. They are commonly used in informal, spoken English.

Interjections don't have to appear at the beginning of a sentence. They can appear in the middle, at the end, or anyplace else where the speaker wants to interject a bit of feeling or emotion. For example, in the sentence, "It's snowing again, huh?" the interjection is found at the end. Here, the interjection is designed to express confusion, or perhaps dismay, at the continued snow falling.

Here are some more examples of interjections:

Ahh, that feels wonderful!

Alas! I'm lost in the wilderness.

Bah! That was a total waste of time.

Good grief! Why are you wearing shorts in the winter?

Grrr! I'm going to get back at him for that.

Hmph, he probably cheated to make such good grades.

Shoot! I forgot my friend's birthday.

Well, duh! That was a stupid thing to do!

See if you can come up with other examples of interjections.

Culture Corner

American Holiday Classics

The holidays offer us plenty of comedy and drama, and have inspired American movie directors and producers for generations. Here is a list of film classics that are associated with Christmas, which is one of the most popular holidays in the United States. Even if you do not celebrate Christmas, one of these movies may become a favorite.

Classic Christmas Films (with release dates):

- *Holiday Inn* (1942)
- *Christmas in Connecticut* (1943)
- *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946)
- *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947)
- *The Bishop's Wife* (1947)
- *A Christmas Carol* (1951)
- *White Christmas* (1954)
- *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (1964)
- *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (1965)
- *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1966)
- *The Year Without a Santa Claus* (1974)
- *A Christmas Story* (1983)
- *Home Alone* (1990)
- *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992)
- *Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993)
- *Elf* (2003)

Conversation Practice

Ask your partner to tell you how to make a traditional dish from his or her native country. Make sure he or she includes a description of the ingredients and where to buy them—especially ones that are unusual—and the way the dish should be served. If your partner prefers to eat rather than cook, he or she can describe the tastes, smells, textures and colors of the foods. If all that food talk makes you hungry, bring in samples for your next session!

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